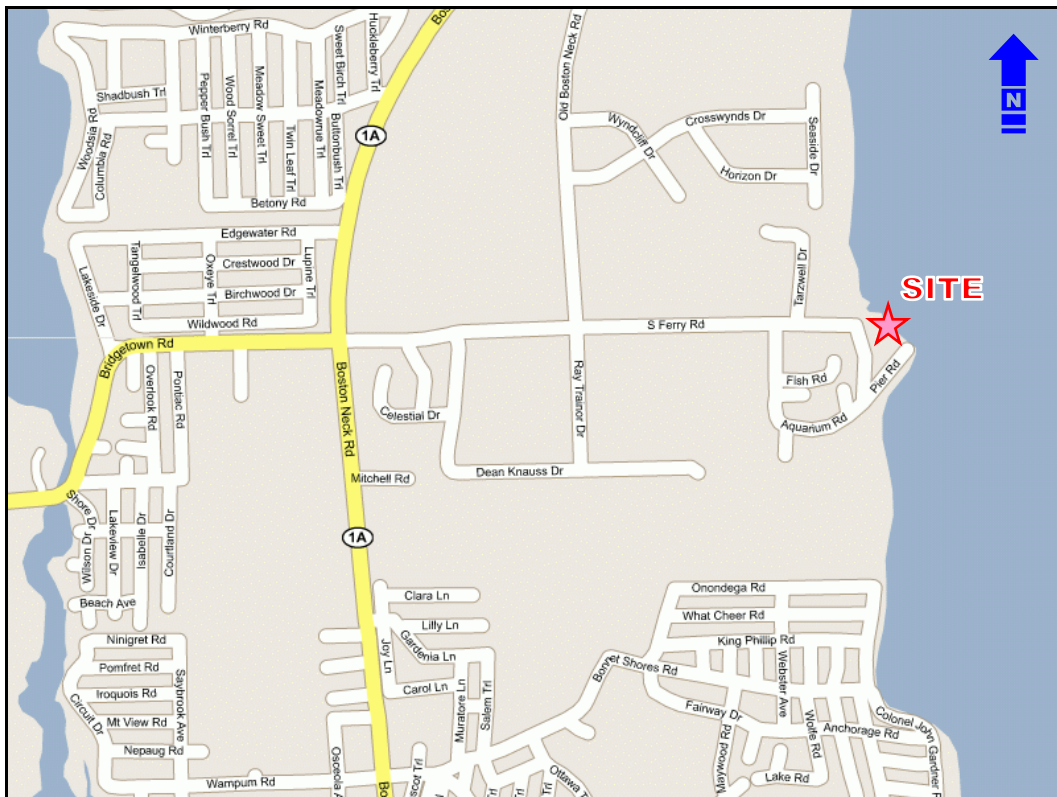


Site No. 22

URI NARRAGANSETT BAY CAMPUS

Narragansett
South Ferry Road



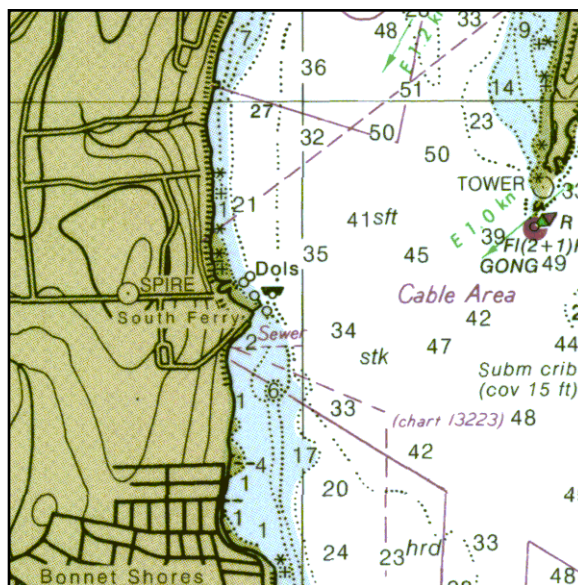
URI NARRAGANSETT BAY CAMPUS

Site Description

The University of Rhode Island (URI) Narragansett Bay Campus site is located at the terminus of South Ferry Road in Narragansett. This West Passage site is home to the URI Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Coastal Institute. This state-owned shoreline parcel also offers public access to the beach for swimming, fishing, and other low-intensity recreational activities. Principal features along the coastline include a small public beach and the Endeavor Pier, a fixed L-shaped dock used by research vessels. While once accessible, recreational fishing use of this structure is currently prohibited.

Location Assessment

Bay Location. The Narragansett Bay Campus site is located along the lower West Passage, approximately 2.5 miles south of the Jamestown Bridges and across from the Fort Getty Site (No. 15) in Jamestown. Water uses along this stretch of shoreline consist of a mixture of beach recreation, recreational boating and sailing, and educational/research uses associated with the University and Coastal Institute. Observed beach recreation activities included swimming, snorkeling, and use of personal watercraft (see Photos 4, 5). In addition to the small mooring area along this shoreline, several sailboats are also landed along the beach (Photos 4, 6). Use of the boat dock at the site is currently limited to EPA and GSO research vessels (Photos 2, 3). The *R/V Endeavor*, a general-purpose oceanographic research ship, was docked at the time of site visit.



As reported through the Online Recreational Fishing Survey, common catch within the West Passage consists primarily of Striped Bass, Bluefish, Summer Flounder, and Scup (spring - fall), with Tautog, Black Sea Bass, Weakfish, and Winter Flounder also reported. Though assessed as fully meeting aquatic life support criteria, waters in the vicinity of this site are permanently closed to shellfishing. These waters have been designated a water quality goal of SB by the RIDEM (see Appendix B).

Land Location. The Narragansett Bay Campus is situated in the northerly section of the Town of Narragansett, approximately 1 mile east of Scenic Route 1A (Boston Neck Road) and 6 miles east of the main URI campus in Kingston. Land use in the immediate vicinity of the shoreline site consists almost exclusively of university and research facilities (see aerial photo), including aquariums, laboratories, and other GSO buildings, as well as facilities of the EPA and National Marine Fisheries Service. Surrounding the campus, land uses east of Route 1A are primarily low/moderate-density residential and undeveloped open space, with Route 1A itself supporting a mixture of residential, institutional, and light commercial uses.

The site is readily accessible from mainland locations (via State Route 4 and U.S. Route 1) and from Jamestown and Newport (via Route 138 and the Jamestown-Verrazano and Pell Bridges). RIPTA buses also provide public transit to the site (Monday - Saturday) along the URI/Newport Line.

Environmental Constraints and Permitting. Coastal features along this shoreline site consist of a small stretch of sandy beach (Photos 4, 5) and the rocky shorelines which flank the beach to its north and south (Photos 2, 7). Waters along this stretch of coast are designated by the CRMC as Type 2 (Low-Intensity Use), and there are known areas of eelgrass in the vicinity of the site.

Facilities Assessment

As its name implies, the subject site at the end of South Ferry Road was formerly a landing for ferry service between the mainland and Jamestown prior to the construction of the Old Jamestown Bridge. In addition to being the current home of the URI Graduate School of Oceanography and natural resource agency facilities, the site includes a small public beach which is well-used for water-based recreation. Public access to the shoreline is supported by a small, poorly-defined gravel parking lot at the bottom of South Ferry Road (Photos 1, 6), which also provides at-grade access to the beach for the launching of small boats and jet-skis. As this lot provides limited capacity, visitors were also observed to park along South Ferry Road and within an "upper" campus lot approximately 150 yards from the beach (Photo 8). While not posted for restrictions and only partially full upon site visit, public use of this lot may be limited or unfeasible during the academic year. Despite the lack of amenities (trash receptacles, restrooms, etc.), the entire public access site was observed to be relatively clean and enjoyed by its user base.

The most prominent feature at the site is the Endeavor Pier, an L-shaped structure used by the Bay Campus for the docking of research vessels (see aerial photo). Several anglers interviewed at other sites noted that fishing was previously allowed from this pier; however this is no longer the case, as the structure is now gated and posted as a restricted area, with signs specifically prohibiting fishing use (Photo 3). Recreation angling the site has consequently declined, as other shoreline features in the vicinity do not offer the quality access to deeper waters previously provided by the Endeavor Pier. Two small stone breakwaters define the main beach and swimming area (Photos 2, 5), though these structures are not long enough to offer improved fishing access.

Existing Site Conditions

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Existing Fishing Facilities		X		
Parking		X		
Compatibility with Surrounding Land / Water Uses		X		
Statewide Transportation Accessibility / Public Transit			X	
Site Aesthetics			X	
	Low	Medium	High	
Water Quality (see Appendix B)		X		

Priority for Capital Improvements: **Low**

The development of improved shoreline access facilities at the URI Narragansett Bay Campus appears to be limited by the established land and water uses of the site, which include both marine research/education uses as well as the current recreational uses of the public beach area. While previously accessible for recreational fishing, the Endeavor Pier is currently designated as a restricted area. Given the general incongruity of fishing with its current function as a docking facility for research vessels (as well as potential safety and liability issues), the reopening of this structure for public fishing access does not appear feasible. While a new fishing structure could conceivably be developed along the shoreline south of the pier (see Photo 7), the landside area at this location (including Pier Road) is actively used by the GSO to support research use of the pier. Considering that (a) several other Narragansett locations south of the site currently offer quality fishing from the natural shoreline, including the Narrow River, Black Point, and Point Judith, and (b) that a more viable location for development (i.e., the Old Jamestown Bridge Site) is approximately 2.5 miles to the north, capital investment in fishing improvements at URI Narragansett Bay Campus should not be considered of high priority.



Photo 1. Looking east to site along South Ferry Road.



Photo 2. West Passage shoreline south from the northernmost end of the site.



Photo 3. The Endeavor Pier. This structure is posted as a restricted area and fishing is expressly prohibited.



Photo 4. Looking northwest along shoreline from the Endeavor Pier.



Photo 5. Small beach/swimming area (foreground) and mooring area.



Photo 6. Lower parking lot at the end of South Ferry Road.



Photo 7. Narragansett shoreline south of boat dock.



Photo 8. Upper parking lot looking southeast from South Ferry Road.